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GOOD AFTERNOON. I WANT TO THANK BILL DEVINE FOR THIS OPPORTUNITY TO SPEAK TO YOU TODAY ABOUT FEDERAL ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY ISSUES.

YOUR TIMING FOR THE CONFERENCE COULDN'T BE BETTER. THE CONGRESS IS ACTIVELY WORKING ON THE NATION'S MAJOR ENVIRONMENTAL LAWS AT VIRTUALLY EVERY STEP IN THE LEGISLATIVE PROCESS. AT LEAST THREE OF THESE FEDERAL STATUTES ARE LIKELY TO BE UPDATED IN THIS CONGRESS.

THE SAFE DRINKING WATER ACT, ESTABLISHED TO SAFEGUARD THE NATION'S TAP WATER FROM CONTAMINATION, IS BEING CONSIDERED IN A HOUSE-SENATE CONFERENCE, WHICH IS USUALLY THE LAST CRITICAL STEP IN THE LEGISLATIVE PROCESS.

THE CLEAN AIR ACT, ESTABLISHED TO PROTECT THE NATION'S AIR SUPPLY, IS UNDER CONSIDERATION AT MY SUBCOMMITTEE IN THE CONTEXT

OF AN AIR TOXIC BILL AND THE DEBATE OVER ACID RAIN CONTROLS.

AND SUPERFUND, ESTABLISHED TO CLEAN UP HAZARDOUS WASTE FACILITIES, HAS PASSED THE SENATE ENVIRONMENT AND FINANCE COMMITTEES AND IS CURRENTLY THE HOTTEST LEGISLATIVE CONTROVERSY WITHIN THE ENERGY AND COMMERCE COMMITTEE.

MANY OF THE ISSUES THAT WE ARE DEBATING TODAY CAN HAVE AN IMPACT ON YOUR OPERATIONS THAT UTILIZE THOSE SYNTHETIC ORGANIC CHEMICALS WHICH ARE BELIEVED TO BE HAZARDOUS IN THE PUBLIC'S AIR AND WATER.

TRICHTHLORETHLENE, ONE OF A NUMBER OF SUCH SUBSTANCES COMMONLY USED IN HIGH-TECH INDUSTRIES, IS AN EXAMPLE OF A CHEMICAL THAT WE ARE CONSIDERING FOR STANDARD-SETTING.

REPEATEDLY, THE CONGRESSIONAL DEBATE CENTERS ON WHETHER WE WILL EITHER HAVE FEDERAL STANDARDS FOR THE RELEASE OF SUCH HAZARDOUS SUBSTANCES OR WE WILL RELY SOLELY UPON STATE AGENCIES OR INDUSTRY TO DETERMINE WHAT THE SAFE LEVEL IN THE AIR AND WATER SHOULD BE.

AFTER OVER THREE YEARS OF WORK AND DEBATE, THE CONGRESS IS CONCLUDING THAT AT LEAST FOR TAP WATER, THE ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY MUST FINALLY SET STANDARDS FOR THE SAFE LEVELS OF A HOST OF IDENTIFIED CHEMICALS, PESTICIDES, AND OTHER CONTAMINANTS THAT ARE NOW WIDESPREAD IN DRINKING WATER SUPPLIES NATIONWIDE.

BOTH HOUSES HAVE ALSO SAID THAT A PARTICULAR TECHNOLOGY -- GRANULAR ACTIVATED CARBON -- IS FEASIBLE FOR CONTROLLING MANY OF THE SYNTHETIC ORGANIC CHEMICALS APPEARING IN TAP WATER.

ONE REMAINING CRITICAL AREA OF DISAGREEMENT BETWEEN THE BODIES IS WHETHER THERE WILL ALSO BE A FEDERAL-STATE PROGRAM TO PROTECT GROUND WATER, THE SOURCE OF OVER ONE-HALF OF THE NATION'S DRINKING WATER.

THE CONGRESSIONAL DECISION TO FIRST IDENTIFY CHEMICALS IN THE SAFE DRINKING WATER ACT FOR EPA STANDARD-SETTING AND THEN SPECIFY A COST-EFFECTIVE TECHNOLOGY THAT WILL WORK TO CONTROL THEM IS IN DIRECT RESPONSE TO A REGULATORY PARALYSIS AT EPA IN THE DRINKING WATER PROGRAM.

THE SAFE DRINKING WATER ACT, PASSED OVER TEN YEARS AGO, REQUIRED THAT EPA SET STANDARDS FOR CHEMICALS APPEARING IN TAP WATER AT THAT TIME. IN TEN YEARS, DESPITE THE GROWING CONTAMINATION OF TAP WATER, EPA SET STANDARDS FOR ONLY ONE CHEMICAL -- SO-CALLED THM'S -- WHICH ARE THE BY-PRODUCTS OF CHLORINATION.

EPA ALSO FOUND GRANULAR ACTIVATED CARBON TO BE EFFECTIVE IN REMOVING MANY OTHER CHEMICALS FROM TAP WATER. BUT IT REFUSED TO REQUIRE THE USE OF THIS TECHNOLOGY BECAUSE OF COST, EVEN THOUGH AT THE SAME TIME THE TECHNOLOGY WAS IN WIDESPREAD USE IN EUROPE.

ULTIMATELY, THE CONGRESS HAS LITTLE CHOICE BUT TO MAKE THESE DECISIONS, WHEN YOU CONSIDER THAT OVER 80 PERCENT OF THE PUBLIC FEELS THAT CONTAMINATION OF DRINKING WATER IS A SERIOUS PROBLEM, REQUIRING URGENT ATTENTION.

MEMBERS OF CONGRESS MUST RESPOND TO THE NEEDS OF THEIR CONSTITUENTS EVEN IF EPA DOES NOT.

THIS DRINKING WATER LEGISLATIVE EXPERIENCE IS SIGNIFICANT IN PREDICTING HOW OTHER ENVIRONMENTAL LEGISLATIVE BATTLES WILL BE RESOLVED. THE REGULATORY PARALYSIS THAT BESETS EPA'S DRINKING WATER PROGRAM IS PERVASIVE ACROSS EPA'S CLEAN AIR AND SUPERFUND PROGRAMS AS WELL.

AND THE PUBLIC FEELINGS ABOUT THE NEED FOR PROTECTION FROM THE GROWING THREATS OF TOXIC CHEMICALS AND ACID RAIN RUN DEEPER THAN ITS CONCERN ABOUT CONTAMINATED DRINKING WATER.

THERE IS GOOD REASON FOR PUBLIC ALARM. MORE THAN SIXTY MILLION POUNDS OF TOXIC CHEMICALS ARE LEAKED OR VENTED INTO AMERICA'S AIR SUPPLY EACH YEAR. IN TESTIMONY BEFORE OUR SUBCOMMITTEE TWO WEEKS AGO, A REPRESENTATIVE OF STAPPA -- A NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF STATE AIR POLLUTION AGENCIES -- TERMS PUBLIC EXPOSURE TO AIR TOXICS "A GREATER RISK TO PUBLIC HEALTH THAN ANY OTHER ENVIRONMENTAL HAZARD."

MOST AMERICANS WOULD BE SURPRISED TO LEARN, IN THE FACE OF TODAY'S CONCERN WITH OVER-REGULATION, THAT THE CHEMICAL INDUSTRY

IS FREE TO RELEASE INTO THE AIR WHATEVER QUANTITIES OF POISONOUS OR CANCER-CAUSING CHEMICALS THAT IT SEES FIT. FOR ALL BUT A HANDFUL OF THE DOZENS OF AIR TOXICS THERE ARE NO GOVERNMENT STANDARDS. THOUSANDS OF CHEMICAL PLANTS AND OTHER MAJOR SOURCES ACROSS AMERICA RELEASE TONS OF DANGEROUS SUBSTANCES INTO COMMUNITY AIR SUPPLIES EVERY DAY.

EPA, THE AGENCY RESPONSIBLE FOR PROTECTION OF OUR AIR QUALITY, HAS NO IDEA HOW THESE HAZARDOUS SUBSTANCES ARE AFFECTING AMERICA'S HEALTH EXPOSURE TO DANGEROUS CHEMICALS. INCREDIBLY, EPA HAS NEVER EVEN GONE TO THE TROUBLE TO COMPILE AN INVENTORY OF HOW MUCH OF WHICH DANGEROUS CHEMICALS ARE LEAKING INTO OUR AIR SUPPLY.

THERE IS AMPLE EVIDENCE THAT AMERICA'S HEALTH IS SUFFERING AS A RESULT OF TOXIC CHEMICALS RELEASED INTO THE AIR. WE KNOW THAT CANCER RATES ARE HIGHER NEAR AREAS WHERE CHEMICAL FACILITIES ARE LOCATED. A TULANE UNIVERSITY STUDY FOUND THAT RESIDENTS LIVING WITHIN A MILE OF MAJOR CHEMICAL PRODUCTION FACILITIES HAVE AN INCIDENCE OF CANCER WHICH IS A CONVINCING UP TO TEN TIMES THE NATIONAL AVERAGE. THE WEST VIRGINIA HEALTH DEPARTMENT REPORTS CANCER RATES TWICE THE NATIONAL AVERAGE AT NEIGHBORHOODS NEAR CHEMICAL PLANTS IN CHARLESTON.

ALTHOUGH THEY HAVE NEVER COLLECTED THE DATA THEY NEED TO EVALUATE THE PROBLEM, EPA'S ANSWER IS NOW TO SAY THAT THEIR FIFTEEN YEARS OF FAILURE TO REGULATE THE CHEMICAL INDUSTRY WAS THE PROPER COURSE AFTER ALL. IN THE WORDS OF ONE ENVIRONMENTAL

CRITIC, "THE AGENCY'S PASSIVE NEGLECT OF THE AIR TOXICS PROBLEM IS BEING TURNED INTO DELIBERATE POLICY."

EPA NOW SEEKS TO HAVE STATE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENTS ASSUME RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE REGULATION OF AIR TOXICS FROM AMERICAN INDUSTRY. YET, MOST STATE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENTS READILY ADMIT THAT THEY DO NOT HAVE THE EXPERTISE OR THE RESOURCES TO DEVELOP STANDARDS FOR HAZARDOUS EMISSIONS FROM SUCH PLANTS.

EVEN MORE IMPORTANTLY, THE STATE AGENCIES KNOW THAT THEY ARE NO MATCH FOR MULTI-NATIONAL COMPANIES THREATENING TO MOVE THEIR JOBS AND TAX BASE TO ANOTHER STATE IF TODAY'S LAX STANDARDS ARE TIGHTENED.

EPA STILL DOES NOT REGARD METHYL ISOCYANATE (MIC), THE GAS WHICH KILLED MORE THAN 2,000 PEOPLE IN BHOPAL, INDIA, LAST DECEMBER AS HAZARDOUS. ANOTHER GLARING EXAMPLE IS PHOSGENE, A NERVE GAS WHICH KILLED THOUSANDS IN WORLD WAR I. TODAY, PHOSGENE IS HANDLED AT HUNDREDS OF CHEMICAL PLANTS ACROSS AMERICA. BUT ITS RELEASE INTO THE AIR IS LEGAL AT ANY LEVEL.

OTHER LESS WELL KNOWN BUT ALSO DANGEROUS SUBSTANCES THAT EPA DOES NOT CONSIDER HAZARDOUS INCLUDE: FORMALDEHYDE, CHLOROFORM, PCBS, CARBON TETRACHLORIDE, AND ACRYLONITRILE. ALL OF THESE COMPOUNDS HAVE BEEN FORMALLY LISTED AS CANCER-CAUSES BY THE NATIONAL TOXICOLOGY PROGRAM, WITHIN THE NATIONAL INSTITUTES OF HEALTH. WORKER EXPOSURES TO THESE SUBSTANCES ARE TIGHTLY CONTROLLED BY OSHA. BUT EPA HAS SET NO LIMIT ON THE AMOUNT OF

THESE TOXICS THAT MAY BE RELEASED INTO COMMUNITY AIR SUPPLIES. THE LIST OF DANGEROUS BUT UNCONTROLLED AIR TOXICS GOES ON AND ON. ADDITIONAL EXAMPLES INCLUDE DIOXIN, EDB, HYDROGEN CYANIDE, AND BUTADIENE.

THE SAD FACT IS THAT WHILE ALL THESE SUBSTANCES, AND DOZENS OF OTHERS, ARE BEING RELEASED INTO COMMUNITY AIR SUPPLIES AROUND THE COUNTRY, EPA HAS SET ONLY A TOTAL OF SIX STANDARDS FOR AIR TOXICS IN THE PAST FIFTEEN YEARS.

EPA DEFENDS ITS LACK OF ACTION ACROSS THESE ENVIRONMENTAL PROGRAMS BY INCREASING RELIANCE ON A TOOL CALLED "QUANTITATIVE RISK ASSESSMENT." THIS TOOL IS USED TO PREDICT THE NUMBER OF PEOPLE THAT WILL CONTRACT CANCER FROM EXPOSURE TO A CHEMICAL. EPA DISMISSES OTHER TOXIC EFFECTS SUCH AS GENE AND BRAIN DAMAGE, BIRTH DEFECTS AND LUNG, KIDNEY AND LIVER DISEASE.

EVEN BILL RUCKELSHAUS, A CHIEF PROPONENT OF QUANTITATIVE RISK ASSESSMENT, ADMITS THAT IT IS AT BEST A "PRETENSE" THAT ASSUMES THAT WE HAVE GREATER KNOWLEDGE THAN SCIENTISTS ACTUALLY POSSESS AND THEN MAKE DECISIONS BASED UPON THOSE ASSUMPTIONS.

THE LIMITS OF QUANTITATIVE RISK ASSESSMENT ARE TOO OFTEN OVERLOOKED ONCE A NUMBER IS COMPUTED. EVEN IF WE KNOW THAT A CERTAIN SUBSTANCE CAUSES CANCER IN ANIMALS OR HUMANS, WE STILL MUST MEASURE WHAT THE POPULATION EXPOSURE WOULD BE FROM THAT CHEMICAL AND ACCOUNT FOR THE DIFFERENT SENSITIVITY TO THE SUBSTANCE AMONG A DIVERSE POPULATION.

THIS IS FRAUGHT WITH UNCERTAINTY. EPA DOESN'T KNOW, FOR INSTANCE, HOW MUCH ACRYLONITRILE AND OTHER DANGEROUS CHEMICALS WILL BE BREATHED AND INJECTED BY A CHILD LIVING IN THE SHADOW OF A CHEMICAL PLANT. YET IT PRETENDS THAT IT DOES KNOW.

THIS PRETENSE IS NOT MINOR. IT IS NOT A MATTER OF ESTIMATING 1,300 OR 1,700 DEATHS. RATHER THE QUANTIFICATION OF RISKS IS SO COARSE THAT NUMERICAL ESTIMATES OF HEALTH EFFECTS CAN BE VERY MISLEADING. THEY ARE DANGEROUS PRECISELY BECAUSE THEY PRETEND TO NUMBER WHAT CANNOT BE COUNTED. AND THEY ARE DANGEROUS BECAUSE THEY CALLOUSLY DISTORT PERSONAL SUFFERING AND DEATH INTO A COLD STATISTIC.

THE MOST BLATANT ABUSE AND MISUSE OF THIS TOOL THAT I HAVE SEEN HAS BEEN IN EPA'S RECENTLY ANNOUNCED AIR TOXIC STRATEGY TARGETING DRY CLEANERS, WOOD STOVES AND GAS STATIONS FOR EVENTUAL FEDERAL CONTROLS AND LEAVING STATE AND LOCAL AGENCIES TO SET STANDARDS FOR RELEASES OF HAZARDOUS SUBSTANCES FROM CHEMICAL PLANTS AND OTHER LARGE FACILITIES.

OUR SUBCOMMITTEE HAS RECEIVED SHOCKING TESTIMONY FROM PEOPLE WHO LIVE NEAR CHEMICAL PLANTS WHO DESCRIBE HUMAN SUFFERING AND DEATH BELIEVED TO BE CAUSED BY RELEASES FROM THESE FACILITIES. PEOPLE IN THE KANAWHA VALLEY IN WEST VIRGINIA TOLD US THAT THEY MUST SLEEP ON AN INCLINE AT NIGHT TO KEEP FROM DROWNING IN THEIR OWN FLUIDS. AND PEOPLE IN LOUISIANA TOLD US THAT THEY ARE EXPERIENCING CANCER, MISCARRIAGES, AND BIRTH DEFECTS AT

UNPRECEDENTED RATES.

I HAVE YET TO HEAR OF SUCH SEVERE HEALTH EFFECTS FROM PEOPLE LIVING NEXT TO DRY CLEANERS.

THIS NEW EPA STRATEGY IS BASED ON THE AGENCY'S SO-CALLED SIX MONTH STUDY WHICH RELIED UPON QUANTITATIVE RISK ASSESSMENT TO PREDICT THAT DRY CLEANERS POSED A LARGER HEALTH THREAT NATIONALLY THAN CHEMICAL PLANTS. THIS STUDY IS RIDDLED WITH BIASES AND OMISSIONS SO SWEEPING, THAT IT IS NO MORE THAN A HODGEPODGE OF RANDOM NUMBERS. OBVIOUSLY THERE ARE MORE DRY CLEANERS THAN CHEMICAL PLANTS SO BY DEFINITION DRY CLEANERS ARE THE NATIONAL PROBLEM AND CHEMICAL PLANTS ARE NOT.

EPA'S STUDY WOULD BE ANALOGOUS TO PICKING A FEW TELEPHONE NUMBERS FROM A TELEPHONE BOOK TO PREDICT EVERYONE ELSE'S NUMBER. YOU MIGHT JUST HIT ONE OR TWO RIGHT, BUT ITS PRETTY CLEAR THAT YOU ARE GOING TO GET A LOT MORE WRONG NUMBERS THAN NOT.

EXPERTS FROM STATE GOVERNMENTS, CONSULTING FIRMS, PRIVATE INDUSTRY, AND EVEN EPA ITSELF AGREE THAT THE AGENCY'S SCIENTIFIC SUPPORT FOR THE RESULTS IN THIS STUDY IS LACKING.

LISTEN TO SOME OF THEIR COMMENTS.

PROCTER AND GAMBLE COMPANY SAID: "THE TRUE MAGNITUDE OF THE AIR TOXICS ISSUE REMAINS UNKNOWN."

THE STATE OF NEW JERSEY SAID: "IT IS INAPPROPRIATE TO VIEW THE TOTAL RISK ASSOCIATED WITH AIRBORNE SYNTHETIC ORGANIC CHEMICALS TO BE SMALL WHEN ONLY 21 OF MANY THOUSANDS OF COMPOUNDS WERE EVALUATED."

THE STATE OF MARYLAND SAID: "THE SURVEY DATA FOR VOCs ARE LIMITED ONLY TO 5 METROPOLITAN CITIES AND ARE FAR FROM COMPLETE FOR ALL POTENTIAL VOC CARCINOGENS."

PHILADELPHIA'S DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH SAID: "EPA HAS ACKNOWLEDGED THAT IF THE UNCERTAINTIES WERE CONSIDERED, THE RESULTING RANGES WOULD BE SO WIDE AS TO MAKE THE NUMBERS MEANINGLESS. DOESN'T THIS SAY SOMETHING ABOUT THE REASONABLENESS OF THIS WHOLE CONCEPT?"

NEW YORK CITY'S DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION SAID: "PROBABLY THE MOST IMPORTANT CONTRIBUTION FROM THIS STUDY IS THE FOCUS PLACED ON THE INADEQUACIES OF THE EXISTING DATA BASE AND THE IDENTIFICATION OF THE BASIS FOR OBTAINING THE NECESSARY INFORMATION."

EPIDEMIOLOGY CONSULTANTS SAID: "THIS APPROACH CONSIDERS CUMULATIVE LOW RISK FROM EXPOSURE TO OFTEN WEAK CARCINOGENS AS THE "ONLY" ASPECT OF THE AIR TOXICS PROBLEM. THE LOW PROBABILITY BUT HIGH RISK SITUATION SUCH AS THE EXPERIENCE IN BHOPAL, INDIA, MUST CHANGE THIS THINKING."

EPA'S OWN STAFF SAID: "THE AGENCIES DO NOT SEEM TO HAVE

ADEQUATE DATA THAT WOULD ENABLE THEM TO PERFORM RISK ASSESSMENTS FOR THE TOXICS POLLUTANTS EMITTED."

THE RADIAN CORPORATION, A CRITICAL CONTRACTOR, SAID: "THE EXISTING AIR TOXICS EMISSIONS SUMMARIES COME FROM A HODGEPODGE OF EPA REPORTS, ARTICLES, ETC. TO OBTAIN ANY MEASURE OF COMPLETENESS, MANY REFERENCES HAD TO BE USED THAT WERE NOT PEER REVIEWED OR PUBLISHED...PERHAPS THE MOST DEFINITIVE CONCLUSION THAT CAN BE REACHED IN THIS STUDY IS TAHT THE EMISSIONS DATA BASE FOR AIR TOXICS IS QUITE POOR."

AND AMERICAN MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS, ANOTHER CRITICAL CONTRACTOR SAID: "...IT IS IMPORTANT TO NOTE THAT WE LATER ESTIMATED THAT THE LIST OF ORGANICS CONSTITUTES ONLY ABOUT 5.7 PERCENT OF TOTAL CHEMICALS AS LISTED BY EPA. WHILE NOT ALL CHEMICALS ARE EXPECTED TO PROVE CARCINOGENIC, IT IS HIGHLY LIKELY THAT OTHER SPECIES OF ORGANICS WHOSE EMISSIONS ARE INCLUDED IN THE NEDS' CATEGORY MAY POSE SIGNIFICANT HUMAN HEALTH RISKS."

EPA'S REPLY TO THIS CRITICISM IS TO PROUDLY ANNOUNCE THAT THE STUDY HAS BEEN PEER REVIEWED AND THEN MARCH FORWARD WITH ITS MISGUIDED FEDERAL STRATEGY.

EPA WOULD BE WISE TO KEEP IN MIND THE WORDS OF A PAST PRESIDENT OF AMERICAN ASSOCIATION FOR CANCER RESEARCH WHO SAID: "[THE CANCER RESEARCHER] SHOULD NOT ALLOW HIMSELF TO BE PRESSURED, AS HE SO OFTEN IS, INTO PUTTING NUMBERS ON RISK ESTIMATIONS, PARTICULARLY AS SOMETIMES HAPPENS, ON THE BASIS OF

DUBIOUS DATA AND UNCERTAIN MATHEMATICAL MODELS. IT IS VERY IMPORTANT I BELIEVE AS A GENERAL PRINCIPLE, TO REMEMBER THAT IN CERTAIN INSTANCES THE MOST HONEST AND ACCURATE ANSWER IS, "WE DON'T KNOW."

EPA PREFERS TO PRETEND THAT IT DOES KNOW WHEN IT DOESN'T. I BELIEVE THAT THE PUBLIC WILL OPPOSE EPA'S NEW STRATEGY WHICH IS BASED UPON SUCH A FAULTY FOUNDATION.

CONGRESS IS ALREADY BEING PRESSED BY THE PUBLIC TO REJECT EPA'S STRATEGY AND PUT INTO PLACE A PROGRAM THAT WILL PROTECT THE MILLIONS OF AMERICANS EXPOSED TO DANGEROUS AIR TOXICS EVERY DAY.

LAST MONTH, TIM WIRTH, JIM FLORIO AND MYSELF INTRODUCED H.R. 2576 WHICH WOULD GET EPA STARTED IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION. EPA WOULD BE REQUIRED TO SET STANDARDS FOR 85 LISTED CHEMICALS AND PROMPTLY PUT IN PLACE RULES DESIGNED TO PREVENT CHEMICAL LEAKS INTO THE AIR, BOTH ROUTINE AND CATASTROPHIC. IT WOULD CUT THROUGH EPA INDECISION, AND REQUIRE IMMEDIATE HEALTH STANDARDS FOR MANY OF THE KNOWN CHEMICAL KILLERS LIKE MIC, PHOSGENE, AND ACRYLONITRILE.

H.R. 2576 WOULD REQUIRE THAT EPA FINALLY BEGIN COLLECTING INFORMATION FROM THE INDUSTRY ABOUT LEAKS OF TOXIC CHEMICALS AND MAKE THIS INFORMATION AVAILABLE TO THE PUBLIC. THE MANDATORY INVENTORY OF LEAKS, COUPLED WITH THE STRONG COMMUNITY RIGHT-TO-KNOW PROVISIONS IN THIS BILL, WILL, I BELIEVE, GO A LONG WAY TOWARDS EMBARRASSING EPA INTO DOING ITS JOB.

H.R. 2576 WILL FOR THE FIRST TIME REQUIRE THAT MANUFACTURERS OF EXTREMELY HAZARDOUS CHEMICALS GO THROUGH A GOVERNMENT LICENSING PROCEDURE TO ENSURE THAT THEY ARE USING THE SAFEST TECHNOLOGY AVAILABLE.

H.R. 2576 WILL ALSO GIVE CITIZENS THE RIGHT TO SUE IN FEDERAL COURT IF THEY ARE INJURED FROM EXPOSURE TO AIR TOXICS. COMPANIES WOULD BE REQUIRED TO PREPARE EVACUATION PLANS IN CASE OF AN EMERGENCY.

THE ROAD WE CHOOSE FOR ADDRESSING THE AIR TOXICS PROBLEM WILL AFFECT THE HEALTH OF MILLIONS OF AMERICANS IN THE YEARS TO COME. EPA'S RECORD, AND EPA'S NEW STRATEGY, PROVIDE CLEAR EVIDENCE THAT IF THE CONGRESS DOES NOT ACT, THE AMERICAN PUBLIC WILL REMAIN UNPROTECTED. I DON'T THINK THE AMERICAN PEOPLE WILL LET THAT HAPPEN.

THE CONGRESS AND OUR SUBCOMMITTEE ARE ALSO GROWING MORE ALARMED ABOUT THE SPREAD OF ACID RAIN THROUGHOUT NORTH AMERICA. LAST YEAR, WE FAILED BY ONLY ONE VOTE TO PASS AT THE SBCOMMITTEE LEVEL A BILL TO CURB ACID RAIN. THE ADMINISTRATION WOULD HAVE PEOPLE BELIEVE THAT THIS IS A PROBLEM ISOLATED TO A FEW LAKES AND FISH IN NEW ENGLAND AND CANADA.

THE TRUTH IS THAT VIRTUALLY EVERY PART OF THE NATION IS AFFECTED BY THE ONSLAUGHT OF ACID RAIN. LATER THIS WEEK OUR SUBCOMMITTEE WILL HOLD A HEARING IN ALBUQUERQUE, NEW MEXICO, TO

HEAR ABOUT THE GROWING THREAT OF ACID RAIN IN THE WEST AND THE FAILURE OF THIS ADMINISTRATION TO DO ANYTHING ABOUT IT.

WE ARE ALSO SEEING SIMILAR POLARIZATION DEVELOP IN THE REAUTHORIZATION OF SUPERFUND. EPA WOULD LIKE TO REDEFINE THAT PROBLEM AS A STATE ONE AS WELL AND NARROW THE SCOPE OF THE LAW TO COVER ONLY A SELECT GROUP OF ABANDONED HAZARDOUS WASTE SITES. EPA IS USING TORTURED ACCOUNTING PROCEDURES TO IDENTIFY ONLY 22,000 ABANDONED WASTE SITES WHEN GAO TELLS US THAT A RIGOROUS INVESTIGATION WOULD REVEAL 378,000 FACILITIES IN NEED OF CLEANUP.

WITH THIS LAW TOO, EPA REFUSES TO ACKNOWLEDGE THE NEED FOR A TIMETABLE FOR CLEANING UP AND WILL NOT SET STANDARDS FOR PROTECTING PUBLIC HEALTH. RATHER THAN REQUIRE THAT CLEANUPS OF THE FEW WASTE SITES MEET STANDARDS FOR CLEAN AIR, WATER AND DRINKING WATER, EPA WOULD HAVE US LET ANY LEVEL OF RELEASE OF CHEMICALS BE DEFINED AS THE SAFE LEVEL. AGAIN, I DON'T THINK THAT THE AMERICAN PEOPLE WILL LET THAT HAPPEN.

IN CLOSING I WOULD LIKE TO SAY THAT PUBLIC SUPPORT FOR STRONG ENVIRONMENTAL LAWS HAS NEVER BEEN GREATER. YET EPA IS REFUSING TO TELL THE PUBLIC WHAT THE SAFE LEVELS OF CONTAMINANTS IN THE AIR AND DRINKING WATER ARE AND THE AGENCY IS REPEATEDLY MISUSING ITS ANALYTICAL TOOLS TO REDEFINE PROBLEMS AS NARROW STATE ONES. FACED WITH GROWING PUBLIC ALARM ABOUT THESE PROBLEMS, CONGRESS IS BEING FORCED TO GO FORWARD WITH LEGISLATION THAT REQUIRES EPA TO ACT TO PROTECT PUBLIC HEALTH. OFTEN THIS PROCESS TAKES LONGER THAN ONE CONGRESS, BUT THE DIRECTION AND OUTCOME ARE VERY CLEAR.

THANK YOU FOR THIS OPPORTUNITY TO SPEAK TO YOU THIS AFTERNOON
ABOUT THESE VERY IMPORTANT PUBLIC ISSUES. I WOULD BE PLEASED TO
ANSWER ANY QUESTIONS THAT YOU MIGHT HAVE.